

REDRESS

Ending torture, seeking justice for survivors

April 2026

JUST REPARATION

Strengthening the community of practice for reparation by sharing topical developments in the field



Just Reparation is a regular roundup of news on reparation, curated by the REDRESS legal team.

This edition highlights key developments in the field of reparations, including the launch of a housing assistance programme for victims of the apartheid in South Africa; reparations recommended by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in a case of child rape in Cambodia; a resolution adopted by the United Nations General Assembly addressing reparatory justice for enslavement of Africans; and steps taken by the UK government to pursue the use of Chelsea sale funds to support victims of the war in Ukraine.

The edition also features insights from Debora Nyokabi from Equality Now Kenya and the steering committee of the Implementation Working Group on decisions adopted by the African Commission on Human and People's Rights for victims of conflict related sexual violence (CRSV).

If you would like to contribute a short article for our *Community Corner* section, or if your organisation is hosting an event you would like to share with our readers or on our social media, please contact our Legal Officer, Alejandro, at alejandro@redress.org.

[Give us feedback](#)

BIG STORIES



SOUTH AFRICA

Housing Reparations Programme Seeks to Restore Dignity to Apartheid-Era Victims

On 7 April 2026, the South African government launched the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Housing Assistance Reparations Programme in Ndwedwe, KwaZulu-Natal. The programme aims to provide housing support to victims of apartheid identified by the TRC as eligible for reparations. The programme's launch event was held in a community that was deeply affected by political violence in the late 1980s and early 1990s. In its remarks, President Cyril Ramaphosa noted that the initiative reflects a moral obligation and contributes to restoring dignity and promoting reconciliation.

The TRC programme represents an important step in South Africa's ongoing efforts toward justice. During the apartheid era, many people were forced to flee their homes. Houses were burned or destroyed, lives were lost, families were displaced. Many also lost their livelihoods and access to land. The effects of this violence have endured for decades and continue to be felt today.

This initiative forms part of South Africa's broader efforts to implement the reparations framework adopted by Parliament in 2003 following the recommendations of the TRC. These measures include financial compensation, medical rehabilitation, social assistance, and symbolic forms of reparation, as well as other measures of satisfaction. Under the housing assistance regulations, eligible beneficiaries listed by the TRC may receive a once-off housing grant per household, per qualifying incident, capped at R183,257 (approximately USD\$11,100) per beneficiary.

Photo by: Axel Bührmann CC 1.0



CAMBODIA

CEDAW Committee Adopts Views Granting Reparation to a Victim of Child Rape

On 16 March 2026, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) published its [Views on Communication No. 187/2022](#) concerning Cambodia. The case concerned sexual violence committed by police officers against an 11-year-old girl. Although the victim's father filed a criminal complaint with domestic authorities, the investigation failed to progress adequately, with authorities dismissing the allegations as fabricated and citing a lack of evidence.

After years of delay, a trial court downgraded the rape charge to offences related to the purchase of child prostitution and sexual intercourse with a minor, imposing minimal penalties to the perpetrator. A higher court later reinstated the rape conviction, but the Supreme Court overturned the arrest warrant, allowing the perpetrator to remain at liberty for nearly a decade. During this period, the victim lacked adequate protection and faced serious restrictions on her education and social life, without effective remedies or redress.

The Committee found that Cambodia's acts and omissions constituted compounded discrimination, including on the basis of gender, age, disability, and the victim's vulnerability, as well as unequal treatment before the law. It concluded that multiple provisions of the Convention had been violated, including the obligations to prohibit discrimination and to take effective measures to eliminate violence against women. It further stressed that excessive delays and failure to enforce judicial decisions constitute injustice in themselves.

The Committee ordered comprehensive reparation, including the prosecution and sanction of the perpetrator, full compensation, psychosocial support, and reintegration measures including access to income-generating opportunities. It also recommended measures, such as the review of statutory rape provisions to ensure that consent is irrelevant in cases involving children, adopting a zero-tolerance policy to sexual violence against children, and strengthening gender-sensitive access to justice.

Photo by: Shankar S CC 4.0



REGIONAL - AFRICA

Global Call for Justice as UN Backs Reparations for Slavery

On 25 March 2026, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution led by Ghana and supported by 123 States, recognising the transatlantic slave trade and the racialised chattel enslavement of Africans as among the gravest crimes against humanity. While the United States, Argentina, and Israel voted against the resolution - arguing that international law does not establish a legal right to reparations for acts that were not unlawful at the time -, UN officials and supporting States underscored the enduring consequences of slavery. Ghana's President stressed the importance of truth, healing, and reparative justice, noting that centuries of enslavement stripped millions of their humanity and continue to drive systemic racism and inequality today.

The resolution affirms that reparations constitute a necessary step in addressing historical injustices affecting Africans and people of African descent worldwide. It calls on States to engage in dialogue on reparatory justice from a comprehensive perspective, including measures such as apologies, restitution, compensation, guarantees of non-repetition, and programmes aimed at tackling racism and systemic discrimination. It also highlights the importance of the restitution of cultural property through international cooperation as part of broader reparations efforts.

For over four centuries, millions of Africans were forcibly taken from their lands and transported across continents for exploitation, in complete denial of their inherent dignity. Esther Phillips, the first Poet Laureate of Barbados, who was present at the event, captured the urgency of the moment: “[b]ecause for them and for the world, there can be no peace without justice—reparatory justice—and that call is answered only when words are turned into action. The question is, what will you do?”

Photo by: UN Photo/Manuel Elias



UNITED KINGDOM / UKRAINE

UK Moves toward Legal Action against Abramovich over Frozen Chelsea Sale Funds

On 17 March 2026, it was announced that the UK government is preparing possible legal action against Roman Abramovich amid ongoing disagreement over the conditions under which the £2.5 billion from the sale of Chelsea Football Club should be released. Government representatives indicated they are prepared to pursue the matter in court to ensure the funds are released and made available to support victims of the war in Ukraine.

[Abramovich sold the club in 2022](#) under pressure from the UK government following Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. The sale was authorised under sanctions on the condition that the proceeds would be used to benefit victims of the war. However, the funds remain frozen in a UK bank account under Abramovich’s ownership, with limited progress over the past four years to ensure they are channelled towards reparative purposes.

While the prospect of legal action has been welcomed by civil society, delays in releasing and using the funds have had a tangible impact on survivors. [REDRESS](#) has

called on the UK government to take immediate steps to advance a reparation process for victims. With an estimated 11 million people in need of humanitarian assistance, the Chelsea sale proceeds present a significant opportunity to translate a high-profile sanctions case into meaningful redress. Channelled through trusted mechanisms supporting survivors, these funds could help align UK sanctions policy with its stated aim of addressing serious human rights abuses. REDRESS has also urged the UK government to ensure the meaningful participation of survivors, civil society organisations and other stakeholders in decisions regarding the distribution of the funds.

Photo by: Gina Bichsel/Pexels

COMMUNITY CORNER

We like to include the perspectives and insights of lawyers, activists, survivors, and others engaged in the field of reparation in **Just Reparation**. Alongside updates on progress in specific cases, your contributions are invaluable for enriching our collective understanding and fostering meaningful dialogue within the reparation community of practice. If you would like to feature in the next edition of Just Reparation, we encourage you to submit your contributions by 20 May 2026 to alejandro@redress.org.

ACHPR Landmark Decision on Reparations for Survivors of Conflict Related Sexual Violence

by Deborah Nyokabi, Equality Now and Steering Committee of Implementation Working Group

The Democratic Republic of Congo consistently reports the **highest** number of cases of conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) annually in the Secretary-General's Annual Report. In this context, the decision of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (the African Commission) in [Communication 686/18 - Association des femmes avocates défenseurs des droits humains, Institute for Human Rights and Development in Africa &](#)



[Equality Now c/ République Démocratique du Congo](#) is highly welcome as it addressed reparations for conflict related sexual violence involving military officials. The communication was filed on behalf of 53 survivors over incidents which occurred

in Fizi Territory, South Kivu, on 1 January 2011 whereby Congolese soldiers entered public and private spaces, shot civilians, and committed mass sexual violence and other abuses against women.

Allegations and Reparations

The communication filed before the African Commission alleged violations of various provisions of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (the African Charter) and the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (the Maputo Protocol) with regard to rape, sexual violence, torture, extrajudicial killings, destruction of homes; and lack of prosecution and effective remedy. It issued a broad set of [remedies](#) that include: *prosecution and punishment provision with monetary compensation in line with national procedures; adequate medical, psychological, or psychiatric care; human rights training for military personnel, magistrates, and law enforcement officials; public apology to the victims within six months; Publication of the decision on the merits in an official government journal within six months; and Submission of an implementation report to the Commission within 180 days.*

Analysis of the Reparation Orders

The reparations orders made by the African Commission are commendable on many fronts namely: provision structural interdicts with time frames of 6 months for the prosecution and punishment of perpetrators; and recognition SGBV as a form or torture at individual, family, and collective levels. However the reparations can be critiqued on the following basis: 9 years' time frame from submission of the communication in October 2016 to transmission of the decision in May 2025; Failure to find a violation of Article 8 of the Maputo Protocol on equality before the law stating *"it had not been demonstrated that legal/judicial services were denied to the women victims of the attacks for the sole reason that they belong to the category of 'women'"* thus employing a [comparator standard](#) to men yet 52/53 victims were women which is indicative of a formal rather than a substantive approach to gender equality; Failure to find violation of Article 14 (1) of the Maputo Protocol on violation of sexual and reproductive rights despite determining that rape had been perpetrated on the sole ground that the survivors had not provided evidence of HIV/AIDs infections, and Deferring calculation of compensation amount to national procedures despite unduly prolonged proceedings at the national level and the fact that it was a judgement in default as the State had not responded to the communication.

Outlook on Follow Up on Implementation

The African human rights system faces an endemic crisis of [low compliance](#) with its decisions and recommendations. It is still early to determine whether the DRC government will comply with the reparatory orders but the outlook looks dim as the 180 days for submission of a report on the status of implementation lapsed on 7th November 2025. The state is yet to submit the report and the status of implementation remains unclear. The DRC has been in a protracted conflict situation state did not engage in litigation and thus the Commission entered a judgement in default. Mechanisms to incentivize follow up on implementation under the Commission's 2020 rules or procedure include: submission of CSO reports on the status of implementation; filing an application for convening an implementation hearing, and developing a multi-stakeholder approach (MSA) action plan for implementation and the national level; There is also a need for the ACHPR to adopt a gender

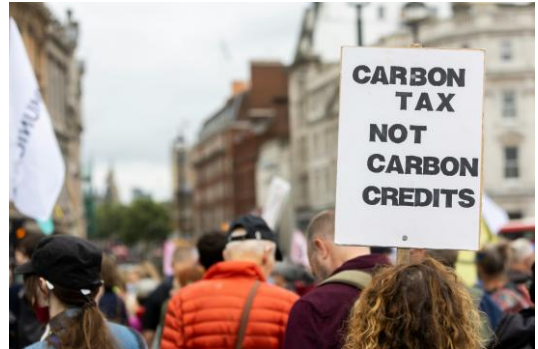
transformative approach to its communication procedure and working methods to ensure gender responsive remedies as done by the International Criminal Court through its [policy on gender-based crimes](#) for the office of the Prosecutor. Ultimately, expeditious and effective implementation is needed to ensure accountability and end impunity on gender-based crimes perpetrated by state agents in conflict situations.

OTHER STORIES

GLOBAL

Climate debt and global justice:
why reparations matter

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JAPAN / OTHERS

Justice, Truth and Reparations
Long Overdue for Survivors of the
“Comfort Women” System

[Read more](#)



SPAIN

Government and Church agree on
protocol to compensate sexual
abuse victims

[Read more](#)



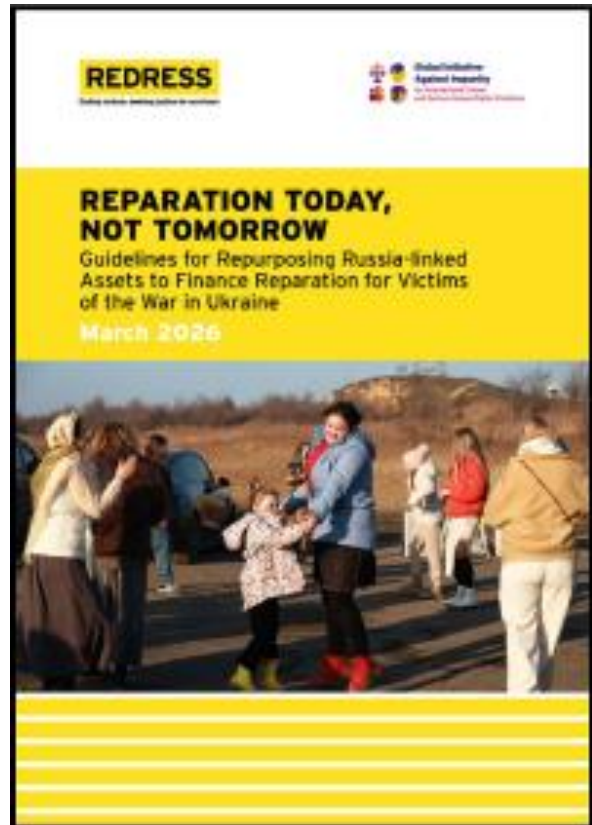
WEEKEND READS

Victims of the War in Ukraine Need Reparation Today, Not Tomorrow by REDRESS

In response to Russia's full scale invasion of Ukraine, competent authorities are increasingly taking steps to seize, confiscate, and repurpose Russia-linked assets for the benefit of Ukraine. Yet, funding for reparation continues to fall short of the needs of survivors, despite its transformative potential for victims' present and future.

REDRESS has developed six guidelines to support authorities in using Russia-linked assets to finance reparation. The guidelines draw closely on consultations that REDRESS held in October 2025 and March 2026 with a group of eight survivors from established Ukrainian survivor networks.

[Read the briefing](#)



Sathankulam Horror: A Conviction and a Reminder on India's long march to Custodial Justice by The Leaflet

Six years after a father and son were brutally tortured and killed in custody in India, a trial court has finally convicted nine Tamil Nadu policemen. But amidst a breakdown of accountability institutions across India, what does the future of custodial violence in India look like?

[Read the article](#)



Stones of Memory: When the Streets of Gaza Speak the Names of Their People

by Ejil: Talk, Abdalrohman Khamise Rusruse

The piece reflects on the scale of the destruction of Gaza, which is not only physical but also an assault on collective memory, identity and belonging. It argues that the city's streets, stones and ruins function as "archives" that carry the names, histories and everyday lives of its people, and that even amid devastation these material traces continue to speak for those who have been killed, displaced or erased. Through a reflection on memory, place and loss, the author shows how Gaza's urban landscape becomes a form of testimony – where remembering is itself an act of resistance against attempts to erase both people and history.



[Read the article](#)

EVENTS

REDRESS WEBINAR SERIES

REDRESS hosts periodic webinars on reparation practices to support the anti-torture movement. These sessions share practical tips, comparative experiences, lessons learned, and other relevant insights for practitioners. They create and strengthen ties among practitioners, academics, and activists from varied backgrounds and contribute to the formation of a community of practice on reparation. Find details of previous webinar [here](#).

STRATEGIC LITIGATION: Challenging Torture and Defending Dissent



REDRESS is hosting a webinar to launch **Casebook 2: Strategic Litigation - Challenging Torture and Defending Dissent**, highlighting how creative legal strategies have been used around the world to challenge torture employed to silence dissent. Through concrete case studies and expert perspectives, the webinar will explore the impact of strategic litigation and share practical lessons for lawyers, activists, and others engaged in anti-torture work. **It will take place on 26 May 2026 at 3pm CET.**

The session will conclude with an interactive Q&A. Interpretation will be provided in French, Spanish, Arabic and Ukrainian.

[Register here](#)

[Here](#) are some upcoming events on strategic litigation against torture and other related topics that may be of interest to you.

If your organisation is hosting an event and would like to share it with our community of practice through this newsletter or REDRESS social media, please send the details to our Legal Officer at alejandro@redress.org.

Thank you for reading. See you next month!

Take a look at our previous editions [here](#).

If someone has forwarded you this newsletter, please subscribe [here](#).





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